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Universal Religion

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Presented

LIFE AFTER DEATH*

BY ALFRED W. MARTIN.

A thoughtful listener to this series of discourses said to me last week, "Are you not adrift, are you not all at sea, a wanderer on the face of the earth?" I replied, never before was I so much at home in the universe as I am now. We of this Society have definite, clear-cut convictions of our own, solidly grounded, practical, comforting, inspiring, and besides these we have freedom to change every single belief we hold, if necessary. What more do we want? Of course we are at sea. Where else should we be? Out on the broad ocean of truth-seeking we are safe and at home. There we enjoy all the benefits of freedom. There no sunken rocks of dogma endanger, no reefs of superstition alarm, no coast line of tradition imperils. Our staunch ship, "free, spiritual and unsectarian religion," was built for the ocean, not for the wharf. We have placed freedom of thought at the helm, taken reason for a rudder, the laws of Nature for our compass, the facts of Nature for our chart, while within ourselves we keep the spirit of truth that is ever impelling man to know more of infinite truth.

The man who desires anything else than truth, who links his destiny to anything else than truth is, to say the least, unwise, because if truth conquers and prevails, he may some day wake up to find that he has entertained superstition and error and that his life, in consequence thereof, has been in large measure a failure. An orthodox friend once said to me that he had grown so to love the beliefs taught him at his mother's knee that even if they were false he did not wish to find it out. I cannot understand a rational being taking such an attitude, simply because the supreme, practical duty for every rational being is to know what kind of a universe it is in which he lives, in order that he may shape his conduct in accordance with the discovered truth. "Why should disillusionment," asks Maeterlinck, "distress you, if you are a man of honest intention? Disillusions we treat with scantiest justice, yet they are really the very first smiles of truth.

*Twelfth in a series of discourses on "Religious Reconstruction," written, after delivery at Tacoma and at Seattle, April 1st, 1900.

They are faithful counsellors none can corrupt. The more disillusions there are that fall at your feet, the more surely and nobly will the great reality shine on you."*

Herbert Spencer's advice, after a life-time of study of the world in which we live, is "get adjusted to your environment." And this is only a modern form of Paul's saying, "become reconciled to God." Surely then, if any belief we hold be wrong we must wish to know it at once that we may readjust our lives to the truth. I, for one, wish to surrender every one of my cherished beliefs if they are proven false. Let me stand empty handed, with my whole life a blank to this hour, if only I may begin with a glimpse of God's truth, if only I may spell the first word of the Eternal's message to man and thence go on learning more and more of what is true and distinguishing it from what is false. It is easy enough to be sentimental over our deepest and dearest faith, to satisfy the heart at the expense of the head. But no self-respecting soul will ever consent to the sacrifice of his reason for the sake of any seeming benefits of heart-faith. If the temple of belief in immortality be not large enough to hold both my brains and my heart I will stay outside and wait for some satisfying assurance that what I devoutly hope for is true. Deep as is our desire for a future life there is another desire that must be deeper still, it is the desire for truth. We want to know the fact whatever it be, and then adjust our lives to it, conscious that no higher duty than this exists for man. Coming now to the particular theme of this discourse let us consider some of the prevailing beliefs about immortality that need reconstruction.

1. We are often told that it is a foolish and sinful waste of time to try to know the truth on this subject, that man was not meant to know it, that if God had intended man to know anything of it He would have made it known in the beginning and not kept the race in ignorance of it all these thousands of years. A very fair criticism this, and very popular withal. Our rejoinder is that God never yet has told man anything outright. Man has had to find out for himself everything that he knows. Even so vital a point as the difference between wholesome food and poison man had to discover. Primitive man was not apprised of the distinction, he learned it by experience. God never spoke to man, he simply revealed himself in the facts and laws of Nature, leaving it to man to discover their meaning by observation and experience, the two ultimate sources of all human knowledge. The belief then, that ignorance of the hereafter has been divinely ordained, needs reconstruction.

*Maeterlinck, "Wisdom and Destiny," chap. 112.

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2. So also does the belief that all study of the problem of immortality is futile and vain because the problem is utterly insoluble. But on what ground is that conclusion established? How can any one KNOW that this question is forever closed? Over and over again have men dared to say that knowledge on a given subject was unattainable, only to find their prophecy ridiculed and disproved. However enshrouded in mystery the truth concerning a future life may be, the effort to find the truth cannot be abandoned and there is no use in advising men to desist inquiring as to the hereafter. I hold with Dr. Savage that man will keep on knocking at the door of this problem till it opens and lets him in to the true solution of it. I hold, too, with the Hon. Wm. E. Gladstone that the attempt to solve it is one of the most worthy and important tasks in which the mind can be engaged, because if it could be demonstrated that there is a future life, it would mean the transformation of Society, it would mean that man is in possession of the mightiest moral lever the world has ever seen. Think, for instance, of the young men who are living licentious, dissolute lives, entirely beyond the reach of reform by any of the traditional arguments, without a shadow of fear of "hell," or the "devil," or an "angry" God; responsive to no parental or friendly appeal; think of the potency there would be in the demonstrated truth of life beyond the grave, think of the practical efficacy of the statement made to these young men that they are to live after death whether they wish to or not, and that they take with them into the future life their low, selfish, sordid, dissolute selves and that not until they have harmonized themselves with the laws of life will they find true happiness and peace. Surely a more potent moral force than that is inconceivable.

3. And while we may believe that precisely such a career awaits the vicious, can we prove it? This question leads us directly to the consideration of a third popular belief about immortality that needs reconstruction, namely, that it can be proved. Disappointing though it be, I frankly confess that up to date there has not been a particle of genuine evidence furnished of the reality of a future life. Intimations, inferences, intuitions, suggestions, strong probabilities, impressive assurances there are in abundance, but none of these can be construed as equivalent to proof. Suppose, for example, that you have an intuition that you are immortal and some one in doubt as to the hereafter asks you for evidence. It will not do to present your intuition because that is not evidence. Many an intuition, true for the individual who holds it, has failed to be true for mankind when submitted for universal verification.

Suppose you affirm that you are conscious of immortality, saying with Addison:

> "I feel my immortality o'ersweep
> All time, all change, all fears, and peal
> Like the eternal thunders of the deep
> Into mine ears this truth, man thou shalt
> never die."

The most you can mean is that you have a strong assurance of your personal survival after death, because no one can possibly be "conscious" of a condition that has not yet occured. Only when it comes can one know a future experience; till then, one surmises, or perhaps has very strong intimations of it. Again, one may INFER immortality from the fact of God's existence (a fact which Herbert Spencer affirms is more certain than any other), but one cannot say one KNOWS it. Just what disposition the Infinite and Eternal Power will make of us after death we cannot determine. All that we have a right to believe is that He will deal with us consistently. If He be, in truth, infinite Wisdom and Love, the future in store for us will be such as accords with these attributes of the Infinite. Whosoever follows Nature with free thought will be taught a faith that trusts Him "even though he slay," and in that trust find the victory over every fear.

Once more, the inference drawn from the reappearance of the crocus and hyacinth in the spring, that we human beings shall continue after death, is only inference, not proof. Most illogical it would be to deduce personal immortality from the reappearance of a flower, because it is not the SAME flower that returns. Nor, again, when we realize that the particles of every dead flower enter into the creation of other plant life, that not an atom in all the universe is wasted, that not a ray of light is allowed to wander from its path, can we legitimately conclude that the higher spiritual forces of man will not vanish and be annihilated. A beautiful suggestion there is here of our continuing to live after we die, but no proof.

Even the recognized fact of human incompleteness and the admitted justice of Providence does not prove that we are immortal. When we reflect on the infinite possibilities of these human natures of ours, on the lack of opportunity while on earth to complete the dimensions of our being, to hew out of the rough marble of life's experiences the spiritual statue of our vision; the lack of time to mature the life-purpose that had only blossomed or budded, when we reflect on this fact of our human life we necessarily conclude that if justice and love are the ruling principles at the heart of the universe, opportunity must be provided after death for completing the incomplete, for realizing the ideal, for the soul, loyal to the ideal while on earth, to continue its sacred pursuit.

Yet the most we can claim for this argument is that it makes immortality an ETHICAL NECESSITY; not that it is equivalent to DEMONSTRATION.

Given a soul who possesses moral seriousness, who looks on life as a solemn trust and a sacred privilege, who devotes himself to the sublime purpose of realizing the highest possibilities of life, and he must believe in immortality. Do what he will, he is irresistibly impelled to believe that when at death there rises from his soul the cry, "Give me the wages of going on and not to die," there will come the answering summons, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Given such a soul persistently loyal in his pursuit of the ideal and he simply cannot believe that his life-task will end in nothingness; that soul-development, scarcely begun, will be instantly ended at death forever; that the Power, who created by evolution a spirit capable of communing with Him, will allow it to lapse again into nothingness. Surely here is abundant rational ground for belief in a future life. For BELIEF indeed, but not for KNOWLEDGE, because into every act of knowledge enters experience as well as reason, and of the hereafter we have had no experience.* So then there remains only the rational ground for BELIEF in immortality and this is furnished by reason when contemplating the soul's loyal pursuit of the ideal and its consequent right (if Justice rules the world), to be permitted to continue that pursuit beyond the confines of earth's opportunities. That is what our sense of justice demands of the Heart of Nature, of God. Were this demand of the loyal soul denied, Nature would be both irrational and immoral because we are here for no other higher purpose than to strive to realize the highest possibilities of our being. Such realization is the supreme good and the will that strives for the supreme good is the good will, and the good will cannot die, else the moral universe is built on sand.

Here then we have an argument of which the most that we can say is that it makes immortality an ethical necessity, not that it furnishes proof of immortality.

As with these so with all the other arguments that have been advanced to prove our conscious survival after death, the most that can be lawfully claimed for them is that they furnish us a tremendous probability, but not what we call PROOF.

4. These reflections lead us to a fourth popular belief concerning immortality that requires reconstruction, the notion, namely, that science has DISPROVED immortality.

Every well informed person knows that the science of today has demolished the materialism that was created by the science of the last

*The claim of Spiritualism is, of course, an open question still.

century. Only belated thinkers describe thought as a "product" of the brain and infer therefrom personal dissolution at death. Not a single scientist of any repute believes that thought is a product of the brain, as bile is a "product" of the liver. Recent science has taught that brain and thought do not stand to each other in the relation of cause and effect, but only in the relation of concomitance. That is to say, certain molecular movements of the gray matter of the brain accompany (not cause) thought. Prof. William James of Harvard University, in his "Ingersoll" lecture declares that the objection to belief in immortality set up by outgrown materialism is "foolish and utterly worthless." He shows that thinking may be at present one of the functions of the brain, that the ego, which uses the brain as an instrument of thought, may not cease to exist, may not cease to do any more thinking when its instrument gets worn out. Tyndall, too, who is often and erroneously spoken of as a materialist, has said that "though there is always corresponding molecular motion to every thought, yet the gulf that separates brain and thought is just as impassable today as it was in the savage periods of the world's history." The scientists of today have called a halt to the presumptuousness of those shallow thinkers who affirm that soul and body dissolve together, that with the disintegration of the brain there is an end of the individual soul. For the brain does not produce thought any more than the kettle produces steam. Thus, as Prof. James puts it, "the fangs of cerebralistic materialism are drawn." And it follows, therefore, that when this earthly tabernacle returns to the dust the ego, the I, may take with it its power to think and its still more blessed power to love.

On the other hand, while the argument of materialism has been overthrown by present-day science and while the mind may be able to do without matter, it does not follow that conscious survival awaits each individual soul, because mind may continue to exist in some other form, just as the sun will cease to exist as the sun and yet every particle of its elements survive.

5. Another belief requiring reconstruction concerns occupations in the life beyond death. The Christian conception of heaven needs radical reconstruction. The New Testament, the writings of the early Christian fathers, the poems of the great ecclesiastics of the middle ages, notably the two Bernards, the hymns of the Christian church today, all agree in the presentation of heaven as a place beyond the skies where the elect are robed in white, decorated with wings, their hands furnished with harps, their heads with crowns;

seated on golden thrones and enjoying celestial music forever; a place

> "Where congregations ne'er break up
> And Sabbaths never end."

But to whom can any such heaven as this be desirable today? As some one has remarked, "There can be only one reason for going to such a heaven and that is, to avoid going to the other place."

To be desirable, attractive, interesting, heaven must be a place in which there is something useful to do, opportunity for growth, for progress, for service; scope for the exercise of all our undeveloped spiritual faculties and powers. The "happy hunting grounds" which constitute the Indian's heaven, contrast most favorably with the Christian's heaven. For in the former there is at least something to do while in the latter there is nothing to do but to listen to music—no suggestion of useful activity, of effort to come nearer to the unattainable ideal. Elizabeth Stuart Phelps did a great service when in her "Gates Ajar," she dared to contradict the traditional notion of heaven by affirming that life in heaven was a continuation of life here, that almost all the occupations that engage us here have their counterpart there. The old belief about heaven is singularly devoid of the sentiment of usefulness, the new idea of heaven is meaningless without it. To spend day after day sitting on a golden throne, or standing in a brilliant circle, singing psalms, is a conception of celestial life against which we protest in this age of multifarious activity. Unless life can be perpetuated after death in some worthier fashion we would prefer to "sleep forever in modest self-forgetfulness." The beauty of the Spiritualists' idea of heaven is that they associate it entirely with usefulness. They deny that there are angels continually singing psalms, they laugh at the popular prospect of sitting on golden seats and kneeling on sapphire pavements. The immortals, they say, are busy helping the weak, nursing the young, teaching the ignorant. They look forward to a heaven of more faithfulness to duty, more unselfish service, more opportunity to develop manhood and womanhood.

6. Still another belief related to immortality there is that needs reconstruction. It is the notion that the act of dying brings with it a sudden transformation of character. If, when you cross the border into that unknown country you are selfish, vulgar, vicious, you cannot be suddenly changed at death and made to feel at home among the pure, the refined, the unselfish, the virtuous. Swedenborg, in one of those wonderful meditations of his, tells a story of an experiment that was made in heaven, showing how utterly impossible it is for any such transformation to be suddenly effected. He

tells of a group of sin-stained souls who believed that they could easily adopt a better kind of life after death when the angels bade them amend their lives and be received among the blessed. But when the experiment was tried and these sinful souls wished that the sordid, sensual life they had lived might be taken away from them and that the angelic life, the life of heaven, might be infused into its place, they found it could not be. Each time the experiment was tried the only result was that "they lay as if dead," they could live no other life, could live no other life than their own.

7. And it follows from this that immortality instead of being, as is commonly supposed, an outright and free gift of God to man, has to be earned. Only as it is so regarded does the doctrine of a future life possess any moral fibre. The idea of everybody going into a state of future happiness immediately after death robs the belief in immortality of all moral worth and verve. Evolution is the law of the spiritual no less than of the physical world, consequently if we would enjoy happiness and blessedness we must earn them through discipline, developing the eternal within us into fitness for that future life in which we believe and for knowledge of which we wait.

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF JESUS. *

BY JOHN W. PRATT.

Low down in the southern skies is a brilliant constellation of several stars called the Southern Cross. Standing conspicuously in the firmament, it looks to human eyes and to human hopes as if it might have been put there by the hand of God in token of some promise to the people of the earth. But when science tore down the studded vault and exposed to view vast realms of sky peopled by glorious suns, it was seen that the apparent cross was due only to the accident of perspective. The stars are not placed side by side, but at varying distances, some of them millions and millions of miles further back than others in the depths of the dark blue sea of unfathomable space. The glorious spectacle is still there, but the idea of the cross must be abandoned. So is this true of Jesus. The Jesus of the gospels is a constellation, but when the telescope of historical research is turned upon the grand ideal of Christianity it is found to be composed of several stars far apart in the realms of tradition.

It is one of the marvels of history that no reference to the Christ of the gospels is to be found in any of the contemporary historians. With the exception of the spurious passage in Josephus, there is no

*Abstract of an address delivered Sunday, Dec. 2nd, before the Seattle Society for Universal Religion.

allusion to his personality. Philo, Pliny, Seneca, Quintius Curtius, and Justus are alike silent. Indeed, this has seemed to be either a conspiracy of silence, which is highly improbable, or conclusive that no such person existed, and is an entire creation of the gospel writers. The truth lies between these two and so far from all these historians being silent about Jesus, the fact is that they all relate the truth concerning him with very full details, only that they relate to different men and different periods.

Writing over a century at least after the fall of Jerusalem, the evangelists compiled a number of stories and legends and strung them together in perfectly good faith as the life and career of an ideal. [Here Mr. Pratt read extracts selected from Josephus, Strabo and Dio Cassius, piecing the passages so as to make up a most startling analogy to the life of Jesus as told in the gospels.]

We read that in the days of the Pauline ministry there was still a wide spread sorrow among the Jews for the death of young Antigonus, the last of the heroic Maccabees who was, in the time of Herod the Great, taken to prison scourged and crucified by Mark Antony. This story is told with manifestation of horror by Strabo, the deed is condemned by Josephus and commented upon as an act of exceptional atrocity, even for those days, by every contemporary historical writer. This is the King of the Jews who was crucified and whose story got mixed up in the legends of the common people with another leader named Jesus, a few years later, in the days of Pontius Pilate. The leader was killed by that dignitary, but so far from the Jews abetting the act, they raised such an indignant outcry that Pilate was summoned to Rome, but before he reached there Tiberius was dead. How the victim was killed does not appear but he may be the one referred to in the Acts as the Jesus "whom ye hanged on a tree."

After Pilate's departure, Cyrenius was sent to Jerusalem and he ordered the taxation mentioned by Luke as at the time of Jesus' birth. Observe that there is a difference of thirteen years between the time set by Matthew and that set by Luke. This is a very trifling error, but what becomes of the story of the star that appeared on the day of the birth over the manger?. Upon which day did it appear?

There was a Jesus told of by Josephus who was betrayed by one of his followers into the hands of the Roman authorities. "He was a leader of the robbers." says Josephus. But it does not follow, that this Jesus was a robber. He may have been a devout and patriotic Jew. The Galileans were con-

stantly rebelling against Rome and burning and pillaging, and in the eyes of the Romans they were all robbers. This is the Jesus, no doubt, who is reported to have instructed each of his followers to "sell thy script and buy swords and follow me."

The inconsistency in the Jesus of the gospels, sometimes so war-like, sometimes so gentle; at times denouncing the Pharisees and at others preaching their doctrine; at times enjoining upon his disciples not to say that he is Christ, but to "tell no man," and at others being hailed as King of the Jews, is all due to the blending of one or more personages under one name, just as tradition has done with King Arthur.

The gentle Jesus who spoke not when he was buffeted is the Jesus of whom, in Josephus and in the gospels, it is related that he wept over the impending destruction of Jerusalem and warned the people "to flee from the wrath to come." His prophetic utterances, his pitiful forebodings, his "divine fury" and his tragic death are very fully told by Josephus.

Concerning the story of the crucifixion we read of three Jews, for whom Josephus interceded. They were taken down, but two died and the other was "restored to life" or resuscitated. This story is paralleled in Luke who tells of a rich Jew named Joseph, "a wise man and a counsellor," who begged the body of Jesus.

One of these more than another formed the chief star in the constellation, but he exercised no distinctive influence over his time; and so far from being the founder of a new religion he was probably only a follower of Judas the Gaulonite, who founded the Christianity of Galilee which afterwards, under the influence of Paul the dogmatist, and of local coloring, became in Greece–the nursery of modern Christendom — and later in Rome, a union of Alexandrian Judasism, Platonism, Mosaic teaching, Hillel's proverbs, morality, natural piety and Romish customs.

It is utterly incredible that the Jewish people who were so eager for a spiritual Messiah and the restoration of a Jewish King of the Jews, who sacrificed their lives by thousands fighting under false prophets, who procured the banishment of Pilate for the murder of a leader, who suffered untold misery for their religion and their country, who received Jesus at Jerusalem with loud hosannas, suddenly changed and cried out to their hated ruler to kill by crucifixion—a strictly Roman punishment—one of their own race, only because he preached to them the kindest religion and because he aspired to be their King. It is worse than incredible; it is prepos-

terous. The Jews did not crucify Christ, They had no motive; the Romans had every motive for killing every Jew whose noble character and martyr-like patriotism was a rebuke to Roman debauchery and a protest against Rome's tyranny....

Yet the glory of the constellation is still in the heavens. The spiritual Jesus still lives.

EDITORIAL.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

In accordance with the announcement made in the last issue of the FREE CHURCH RECORD, this monthly appears under a new name and with a symbolic seal presenting in brief the essential principles and objects for which the cause of Universal religion is organized. We cannot agree with Shakspere when, as in "Romeo and Juliet," he suggests that there is nothing in a name—"a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." There is a great deal in a name and in the substitution of the name "Universal Religion" for the "Free Church Record" there is secured a title that more adequately designates the purpose of our monthly publication and more suitably represents the wider scope of influence and usefulness which it has recently acquired. The seal is self-descriptive and needs no explanation unless it be the inscription above and below the globe's belt — Fraternity in Freedom. Those three words, so stated, express the highest ideal of religious fellowship to which man can aspire. They state the secret of religious unity and universal peace. First there must be freedom, for only on that basis can fraternity be realized. On no other basis than that of equal freedom can universal brotherhood cease to be a dream of the idealist and become a living reality. Not until men learn to believe in fraternity in FREEDOM shall we have the Commonwealth of Man, the supreme desideratum of society.

Universal Religion, therefore, plants itself uncompromisingly upon true freedom as the necessary condition of that cosmopolitan fellowship which shall know nothing of the sectarian rivalries and antagonisms and jealousies that wall from each other the great religions and the small religions belonging to them. For each sets up some exclusive claim of its own and limits fellowship to those who hold its creed. Christianity is no exception to the rule. It does not teach universal brotherhood, but only CHRISTIAN brotherhood, aiming to convert the entire non-Christian world to its creed of salvation through Christ. Instead of asking to unite all men of all faiths in the bonds of HUMAN love it aims to bind them in the bonds of CHRISTIAN love and will recognize no other, thereby shutting

out all who cannot accept its terms of fellowship. Universal Religion, recognizing the one condition upon which true universal brotherhood is possible puts freedom first, persuaded that universal brotherhood is possible only when there is respect and reverence for the universal human right to the free exercise of reason and conscience.

Fraternity in freedom! The world is not yet ready for it. The time is not yet ripe. But as sure as man is evolving a soul the day of universal brotherhood will come, merging into itself Christian and all other sectarian brotherhoods.

THE "REV."

In a recent issue of the Boston Transcript there appeared an article discussing the limitations of the clerical profession. The writer, a clergyman, makes the following comments upon the use of the title "Rev," against which there is a growing rebellion among ministers and on the just ground that it is used to designate not merely a calling, but also a particular kind of man. After alluding to his correspondence with James Freeman Clarke, who begged him to omit the "Rev" from his name, the writer continues:

"I more than once noticed that he escaped from the professional title whenever he could, and that he was anxious to be judged as a writer and public speaker on morality, and not as a professional clergyman. The same desire was expressed by Henry Ward Beecher, who did not wish to be a 'Reverend.' The attitude of David Swing was essentially the same, though I do not know that he ever openly repudiated the professional title. On many occasions Dr. Edward Everett Hale has shown his unwillingness to be shut within the puny limits of the clerical profession. In many ways he has indicated his superiority to the conventional requirements of that calling, and has refused to be restricted by its conditions.

"The man who wishes to see the facts of life as they are, and who wishes to present the great fundamental conceptions of religion and morality with their own sanctions only, must feel himself seriously hampered by the traditional notions of his calling still everywhere accepted. Especially will he rebel against these conventional preconceptions if he undertakes to speak from a larger point of view than that of the pulpit. When he goes outside of the pulpit, and puts his thoughts into print, he finds it difficult to understand why the "Rev" should still follow him or why his word should be prejudged because of that title having once been associated with his name. Is he nowhere to speak to men as a man,

and on the level of the worth of what he says?

"I shall be deeply thankful to those who omit this title from the front of my name. It may be a needless request, and a futile rebellion against time-honored custom; but it will be a thankful escape from restrictions I do not care to accept."

CHURCH SUBSCRIPTIONS.

The first week in January is the time when most religious societies arrange for their financial support through the new year. Now that the hard times have passed and the era of prosperity is at hand, church treasurers and trustees are eagerly awaiting to see how many of those who reduced their contribution a few years ago will enlarge it and how many who have made no regular subsciptions will now feel disposed to make them. In one of the back numbers of "Unity" we find a striking classification of church subscribers, made by the editor (Jenkin Lloyd Jones) and which is well worth noting.

1.—Those who treat the church as the "last of the luxuries," as something very good to support after the demands of the club, the theatre and social debts have been met. These people usually contribute with the remark that they "regret it is not more, but it is all I can do this year, perhaps next year I can do more." 2.—Those who frankly recognize the claims of the church in the community, an institution that must be supported like the hospitals, asylums and other "charities," and who contribute a fixed sum "this much and no more." Instead of contributing according to their income, and according to the benefit they derive from the church, these persons are very apt to make an examination of what others pay and thereby gauge their own subscription. 3.—Those who subscribe with a "financial reservation," giving a minimum at the begining of the year, expecting to be forced to the maximum at the end of the year—"a self-protective policy alas, well grounded in experience." But "let the budget of the church be made out with as much business scruple and confidence as is the budget of any other organization and let it be known that this budget can be met only by the support of those who believe in it and then the minimum subscriber will have no excuse for his meanness—at the beginning of the year. 4.—Those who recognize the church not as a "luxary," not as a "charity" but as a "necessity" not only in the life of the community but also of the individual, a help they cannot afford to dispense with and who therefore "pay in proportion as they are prospered." This class does not "try to drive a bar-

gain with the church," they give freely, generously, ready to give more if legitimate need presses. "Let all the men, the women, the children become members of this fourth class and the first three classes will disappear by a process of reabsorption of the lower into the higher."

NEWS OF THE SOCIETIES.

TACOMA.

On Nov. 26th and Dec. 14th Mr. Martin lectured at the Tacoma Theatre to unusually large audiences. His topics were: "The Paris Exposition" and the "Passion Play at Oberammergau" Both lectures were illustrated by stereopticon views, many of which were specially selected by Mr. Martin while in Europe last summer. The two lectures were given for the benefit of the church.

Mr. F. W. Low, organist of the church has invited all persons interested in singing to a series of fortnightly musical evenings, at which new tunes for congregational singing will be learned and after each rehearsal a short talk given on church music and composers. This is an opportunity not to be missed by those who are musically inclined.

Mrs. Wm. B. Parker of Boston, daughter of the late O. B. Frothingham, presented the Society with a fine collection of books from her father's library. This welcome gift, followed by the generous donation of a handsome book-case by Mr. G. L. Holmes has resulted in an "adult's library" for church members and friends of the Cause. Miss Alice C. Van Ruyper was appointed librarian and last Sunday began the issuing of books to borrowers. Further donations of serviceable books will be thankfully received. Address Miss A. C. Van Ruyper, 801 North I St., Tacoma.

Mr. Martin delivered the memorial address at the "Lodge of Sorrow" of the order of Elks, in the Tacoma Theatre, Sunday evening, Dec. 2nd. His theme was "Immortality and the present life," A portion of his address appears in the discourse printed in this number.

The Fortnightly club of young people now numbers forty. A series of monthly talks on European travel is being given before the club in the church parlors by Mr. Martin.

SEATTLE.

The Society has purchased a hundred additional chairs for use at the Sunday meetings. The attendance continues to be large and interest in the movement is increasing. The "Question Box" has

proved to be a valuable feature of the Society's work. On the last Sunday of each month Mr. Martin opens the box and at the close of his discourse answers whatever questions it contains. There were eleven questions answered last month.

The annual meeting for the election of officers will be held January 13th at 9.00 p. m. Let every member feel it his duty to be present and vote at this important meeting.

A "special" bulletin of the Society states that the two lectures recently delivered by Mr. Martin at Tacoma, on the "Paris Exposition" and the "Passion Play" will be delivered at Ranke Hall for the benefit of the Society, January 8th and 22nd. The trustees expect to pay from the proceeds for the extra chairs and for the "hymnal." Beyond these the Society has no outstanding debts.

Hon. John W. Pratt, secretary of the Society, addressed the congregation on the evening of December 2nd upon the "historical basis of Jesus." We publish in this number an abstract of the discourse.

PERSONAL.

Rev. Arthur B. Ellis, a graduate in three departments of Harvard University, addressed the congregation of the Tacoma Free Church on Sunday Dec. 2nd. His subject was Christian Socialism and in the course of his sermon he referred to the practical workings of the theory at the brotherhood colony of Burley, Washington, with which Mr. Ellis connected himself about a year ago.

The followiug persons signed the membership roll of the Tacoma Free Church during December.

Mrs. E. W. Chantler.
Mrs. M. A. Warner.
Mr. C. S. Johnson.
Miss W. Warner.
Mrs. H. E. Hicks.
Mrs. H. E. Fehse.
Mr. Theo. K. Corbiere.
Mrs. E. Seger.
Miss Carolyn Mason.

Mrs. F. W. Low has sold the entire edition of "Liberty, Loyalty and Love," a collection of helpful thoughts from the discourses of Mr. Martin.